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THE COST OF INIQUITY.

It is a fact in the history of Prussia, that Frederic II. would never have inflicted upon his country the evil of farming out his revenues, had it not been that, while he had them in his own hands, he was cheated so extensively by his subjects. For the same reason, about the same time, the government of the king of Great Britain in Hanover was obliged to adopt the same oppressive measure. If we call to mind the anecdote of a party of Frenchmen trying which could bring the blackest charge against human nature, when Voltaire, commencing with, 'There was once a farmer-general,' was admitted by common consent to have already carried the day—we may form some idea of the severity of a punishment which consisted in farming out a nation's revenues. But the anecdote is merely a type of a class of troubles which men are continually bringing upon themselves by false doings and appearances.

Why is it that merit has such difficulty in obtaining preferment? False pretension stands in the way. Why is it that a truth is so long in forcing its way amongst mankind? Because it is so difficult to obtain sound evidence in its favour, and distinguish it from the hundreds of falsehoods which are constantly contending with it for notice. We know it as a certain fact of society, that a man may come forward with the design of offering his fellow-creatures some great benefit, and yet he will be received with distrust, and checked at every turn, as if he were a knave aiming at some sordid advantage for himself. And the reason, we can all see, is, that selfish aims are so often concealed under a philanthropic guise, that society is compelled to be upon its guard against even the fairest appearances of benevolence, until time has given a guarantee for their genuineness.

Fictitious literature has no more favourite point than that furnished by the claims of virtuous poverty treated with coldness, and left to neglect. Its heroes, manly but out-at-elbows—its heroines, amiable but outcast—are always turned away from in an unaccountable manner, to the indignation of all readers of sensibility. People living in comfortable cottages are mysteriously addicted to the unchristianlike practice of refusing admission to vagrants, just as the heavens are about to break forth in a snow-storm. Country justices are invariably harsh towards the respectable persons who come in equivocal circumstances before them. These descriptions, we can have no doubt, are a reflection of what passes in actual life—only, in actual life there is never any reason for wonder about the causes. Shabby vagrant people, and people who appear in equivocal circumstances and without good credentials,

are there so commonly found to be bad, that no one stops to think of possible exceptions. The few good suffer because of the prevalence of iniquity in connection with those appearances. Were there no transgressors of any kind in the world, fiction would be entirely deprived of this important province of its domain; for the wretched, under no suspicion, would then be everywhere received with open arms, succoured, and set on their feet again. Even the superintendents of Unions would in that case become genial, kindly men, quite different from the tyrants which they always are in novels; or rather, there being no longer any human failings, there would be no longer any poverty calling for public aid, and Unions would go out of fashion.

Every one acquainted with business must have occasion to observe how many transactions of hopeful appearance are prevented by the want of confidence. And even where transactions take place, we constantly see that something must be sacrificed, or some inconvenience incurred, in order to guard against possible default. Were there, on the contrary, unlimited confidence between man and man, no bargain or barter, great or small, tending to mutual advantage and convenience, would ever be prevented; and all such arrangements would be conducted on a footing of the utmost economy. We cannot doubt that the general happiness of society would thus be greatly increased. Even those transcendental blessings which are dreamed of by the votaries of Socialism, what is to prevent their being realised but the one little unfortunate fact, that men are not yet prepared to act upon perfectly upright and unselfish principles? They require to put all their industrial operations into the form of a conflict, rendering themselves at the best good-humoured enemies to each other, and entailing frightful misexpenditure of means, simply because no one can entirely trust his fellows. If men were disposed each to do his utmost for the commonwealth, not caring for special benefits to himself, it might quite well be that the enjoyments of all would be increased, and earth rendered only a lower heaven. But how to bring them to this disposition—and how to keep them at it!

As all the losses, inconveniences, drawbacks, shortcomings of expected good, and miserable failures and disappointments experienced in life from these causes, are capable of being viewed in a positive aspect, it does not seem at all unreasonable to speak of them as forming an Iniquity Tax. There is, it may be said, an Excise from the happiness of us all, through the operation of our moral deficiencies and misdoings, although it is not possible to state in any one instance its exact amount. It is very hard that the faithful here suffer for the unfaithful, the wise for the foolish, the sober

for the profligate; but that is only accordant with the great law of society—that we are all more or less compromised for each other. The Iniquity Tax may be viewed very much as we view what are called War Taxes. As these are strong reasons for maintaining peace, so is the Iniquity Tax a powerful motive for our doing whatever is in our power to improve the national integrity and advance truthfulness in all things. An improved civilisation is an improved economy, with increased blessings for us all.

LITTLE CRIPPLEGAI THE MISER.

'Your father's late in returning home to-night, Alice. I am perplexed what to do: it is near the hour of my being in barracks, and yet I can't bear to leave you—alone in this poor cottage by the wayside.'

'Its poverty is its security,' replied Alice—'stronger than bolts and bars.'

'There may be some truth in that,' remarked her brother; 'but there are rough people on the roads now. The strike of the pitmen is an ugly thing, and the sailors are swarming like bees with this contrary wind keeping their ships in port.'

'Indeed, dear Edward, there's no reason for alarm,' observed Alice confidently. 'Our cottage, though lonely, has never been attacked, and we have lived in it now for ten years. Father is often later than this, but he always returns in safety. I feel no anxiety on his account. Who would hurt a poor lame man like father?'

'I am less confident than you as to his safety. A man that has the reputation of being a miser is always an object of disrespect and dislike, and sometimes a mark for villainy. It made my blood boil yesterday, as we were marching up the town, to hear one of our officers say as you passed with work from the colonel's lady: "There goes little Cripplegait the miser's daughter!" I could have shot him!'

'Hush, Edward! I shall become more alarmed for you than father, if you suffer these ridiculous trifles to excite you so.'

'They are not trifles, Alice. We all share in the ridicule which that detested nickname attaches to father: even a miserable beggar-boy shouted it after him in the street the other day!'

'It is grievous,' said Alice; 'but I fear there is no help for it now. We have but few friends left, and this name, which was given him at school in mockery of his lameness, and has stuck ever since, now supersedes his own. When the colonel's lady yesterday, conjecturing that I was your sister, asked me if I were Alice Wheately, the name sounded almost strange to my ear.'

'There was something about mother while she lived,' said Edward thoughtfully, which kept off the ridicule that has since been heaped so cruelly on father's peculiarities—but he has changed greatly since her death. You were too young when she died, Alice, to remember how gentle and beautiful she was. Father worshipped her, and no wonder. We used to live in a comfortable house then; but after her death, father's love of money seemed to be transferred to love of money; he gave out that he was reduced to beggary, by the failure of different speculations—though no one believed him—and came to this miserable cottage, craving and accepting employment in any possible shape that could add a mite to keep alive that fiend avarice which seemed suddenly to have taken possession of him.'

'Well, I can only remember father as he is,' said Alice. 'But it seems to me, Edward, that since you left home and enlisted for a soldier, now three years ago, you are changed too: mixing with the world has made you proud, and you despise poor father and me.'

'My own darling sister!' said the young soldier, pressing her fondly to his heart, 'if I am proud, it is of

you and you only! For myself, I suppose I shall never rise to the rank of corporal; but if a war should only break out, how I would fight for promotion or death! I care little which, but for you, sister, and my own dear Jane.'

'Hark! I thought I heard some one lift the latch,' said Alice, going courageously into the passage which divided the only two rooms of the cottage. 'No; there's no one here!'

'There is no one here certainly, but as certainly the latch has been lifted,' remarked the brother as he found the door a little ajar. 'It could not be the wind, for there's not a breath stirring.' And he looked out on the clear white frosty road, which was lying silent and untrodden in the moonlight.

'The whole mystery is,' said Alice laughing, 'that the door could not have been closed properly after you entered; and so the latch slipped when I heard it.' But Edward Wheately was not so easily satisfied as his sister; he searched the other room, and went through the garden at the back of the house, where, finding nobody, he was compelled to believe that her explanation of the matter was the right one. It was impossible now for him to remain another minute; he had left himself but scant time to reach the barracks; so obtaining a promise from his sister that she would bolt the door as soon as he was gone, he reluctantly bade her good-night.

Alice, in spite of all her boasted courage, could not help glancing suspiciously round when, after fastening the door, she went towards the window commanding a view of the road, to draw its homely blue-checked curtain. The little casement opposite, which looked into the garden, as if to shew its confidence in that part of the domain, deigned only to screen itself with a short blind which reached but half-way up. 'Mercy on me!' exclaimed Alice, as she approached it, 'I thought I saw a man's face looking in over the curtain! How very ridiculous! Edward has made me quite nervous.' And Alice, as if spurning such weakness, began to work, and hummed a tune to beguile the time until her father's return; but ever and anon her eyes glanced to the half-curtained window, where, if any face were now peering in, it must have belonged to that highly-privileged gentleman, the man in the moon, who was certainly casting very bright and familiar glances upon Alice at the moment. Thus reassured, she was resolved to prove to herself, by going and looking out of the window, that she had conquered her apprehensions—when, most unmistakably, a face again raised itself above the edge of the curtain. Poor Alice clutched the chair and scarcely breathed. A strong arm seemed to shake the casement, which was almost immediately lifted up, and a man jumped into the apartment.

Alice, still grasping the chair, stood the very impersonation of some goddess—Pallas, it might be, though armed but with the weapons of a woman's heart, innocence and offended pride at outraged privacy. The intruder did not seem one of the common stamp. It was doubtless the consciousness of this which gave Alice the extraordinary courage and self-possession which seemed to awe the man, and bow him like a coward before the truthful dignity of her raised head and compressed lip. His hat had been knocked off, probably in his forcible entrance, and the undisguised face certainly was not that of a ruffian.

'I—I am concerned, madam—that is—upon my honour,' stammered the intruder; 'I have done so confoundedly foolish a thing, that I scarcely know how to apologise for it. The fact is, I have jumped in at that window, and having done so, it occurs to me, that probably the best atonement I can make, is—to jump out again.'

'May I inquire the reason for so extraordinary an intrusion?' asked Alice.

'A wager at mess yesterday. Your beauty was

discussed rather freely, and your prudence loudly extolled; upon which I had the impertinence—forgive me—to boast that I could effect an interview with you; I had twice or thrice watched you home, and had seen a young fellow belonging to our regiment leave your cottage late in the evening. This circumstance, I confess, gave an unaccountable impetus to my determination. It was my intention to have entered rationally by the door, but hearing the voice of the young spark, who quitted you a short time ago, I thought it wiser to wait until my favoured rival had departed, when you most inhospitably barred the door, positively compelling me to enter by the window.

'I am surprised, sir, that a gentleman of your appearance and calling should be guilty of so mean and unwarrantable an outrage. For your own sake, I advise you to be gone before my father returns.'

'My dear Miss Cripplegait!'—said the young officer, stumbling unfortunately upon the opprobrious appellation, and possibly he knew no other. Alice's colour and indignation increased—she felt positive hatred for the man who could so deliberately insult her.

'My dear Miss Cripplegait!'—repeating the odious name by way of being impressive—'I entreat you to forgive me; do not frown so unmercifully; I will atone in any way you may dictate. If you desire it, I will be gone at once, without another word of explanation; but I shall ever feel indebted to your forbearance and politeness, if you will listen to me for five minutes. Grant my request—I will not offend again; and recollect, "to err is human, to forgive, divine." Five minutes, not a second longer; and he looked at his watch, then anxiously at Alice, as if entreating her to allow him to mark the time.

'Proceed, sir,' said Alice with something of queen-like condescension, but still standing and immovable.

'Allow me to give you a chair,' said the young officer with the most provoking politeness.

Alice, in spite of her indignation, was compelled to be seated, and was very naturally betrayed into the common-place civility of motioning to her extraordinary guest to be the same.

The handsome young officer looked particularly happy. 'To prove that I can be disinterested, my dear madam, I must caution you without reserve or loss of time—for you have limited me to five minutes—on your misplaced confidence in one who, I am sorry to say, is altogether unworthy of the affection with which you apparently honour him.'

'I really am at a loss to understand you, sir.'

'I certainly am taking a great liberty, my dear Miss Cripplegait.'—Alice's colour rose again.—'But though I run the risk of offending you, I now feel it my duty, even under so severe a penalty, to render you this service, and atone in some measure for the impertinence of which I have been guilty.' Of course Alice was interested, and looked so, which seemed perfectly satisfactory, and the only answer expected.

'I am really grieved that a young man of whom I thought so highly, should be capable of such duplicity, especially towards one so deserving, so excellent, so—I must say it—so beautiful as yourself; but however unwelcome the information, I am now bound in honour to tell you, that the affectionate endearments of which I was a witness, and of which I would have given worlds to have been the recipient, are unworthily bestowed. You, of course, cannot be aware that the young man in question is engaged to a very amiable girl, who has not the least suspicion of his affections being placed elsewhere.'

'I think I begin to comprehend you, sir,' said Alice very composedly. 'You have given yourself unnecessary trouble on my account; and I must entreat of you, without further delay, to leave the house.'

'My dear madam, permit me to say I feel too great an interest in you; my happiness is too deeply involved

to allow me to drop the matter so coolly. If the occurrences of this evening should transpire, and be talked of at mess to-morrow, give me your sanction to refute the gossip of that young puppy's being so dear to you—allow me to say I have Miss Cripplegait's authority for contradicting the assertion?'

'I must beg entirely to decline the interest you take in me, sir,' said Alice rising, as if impatient for his departure; 'and to correct a mistake which will probably be a sufficient explanation of the whole affair, by informing you that Wheatly is my name.'

'Wheatly!' echoed the young officer. 'What! is Ned Wheatly your brother?—or has he the audacity to be your cousin?'

'I am thankful, sir, that he is my brother.'

'What an officious fool I must appear to you, Miss Wheatly! I would have given the world to have aroused one spark of interest in that frigid heart of yours; and now, of course, your only feeling for me will be contempt! With a thousand apologies, allow me to run the risk of breaking my neck by going out as I came in.'

'Certainly not,' said Alice. 'The mode of egress, though harmless to you, might not prove so to me. There are many who would readily turn such an incident against us: your thoughtless conduct in coming here at all, and the mere circumstance of your being seen quitting the house in my father's absence, may be sufficient occasion for the gossip of our enemies.'

'Then allow me to stay till your father returns?' he asked very coolly.

'On the contrary, I must insist on your going instantly, to avoid the possibility of meeting him.'

'I have done,' said the young officer gravely; 'and regret exceedingly, Miss Wheatly, that my absurd behaviour should have given you a moment's uneasiness. I trust I shall soon have an opportunity of appearing to more advantage before you; when, bowing himself out after the fashion of a presentation at court, his foot stumbling, he was precipitated very unceremoniously and rather ludicrously across the threshold. On rising from his ignoble position, and limping off to make way for another visitor to the cottage, he was accosted by the new-comer with: "Be you little Cripplegait the miser, sir?" The dashing defender of his country would, if he could, have annihilated the whole race of Cripplegait at that moment.'

'Have you a message for my father?' asked Alice of the new visitor, with the composure of simple innocence.

'Yes, miss; he's to be at the George Inn at six to-morrow morning, to go a short journey with a gentleman on particular business, and back again in the evening.'

'Very well,' said Alice; 'I will take care to tell him as soon as he comes home.'

The man then retraced his steps to the town, picking up by the way two or three acquaintances, with whom he took care to discuss the circumstance of a gentleman coming tumbling out of Cripplegait's cottage, tipsy, he said, in the absence of the old man.

'Ay,' remarked one, 'I've seen two or three of them soger chaps after that good-looking lass down of a night about the cottage.'

'And no wonder,' said another, 'if she packs up her tatters and follows the drum to get off from her old miserly father.'

'There's one of the barrack blades that wants to get her away!' said a third, as Captain Dinsley passed them.

Overhearing partly what was said, the consciousness of the possible results to the poor girl whose artless beauty had made a strong impression upon him, struck to the very heart of this thoughtless but generous young man. 'What have I done?' said he with passionate self-upbraiding, 'and how can I atone?'

Scandalous tales, like mushrooms, spring up in a night, and have as many gatherers next morning. This poor Alice was about to experience. However, in the meantime, her chief anxiety was about her father's delayed return. She resolved not to mention the visit of the young officer either to her brother or father—the former, she was sure, would resent it by some imprudent word or act; and the latter, from his naturally suspicious disposition, it would be difficult to convince of her entire innocence in the matter. Alice had never before felt so desolate and unhappy; tears were stealing down her cheeks—and Alice was not apt to give way to sentimental weakness; but the idea of any one deeming himself privileged by her poverty and unprotected state to offer an insult which he dared not have ventured to one in a higher position, hurt the pride of the poor girl; and for the first time the daughter's heart dared to arraign the father, who could thus, day after day, leave his child exposed to the possibility of such an outrage.

With this new and reproachful feeling towards a parent, Alice raised her head from the table where it had been bowed down in sorrow, and, as if tried and convicted on the spot, beheld her father standing gazing at her. His small shrewd eyes seemed to read her inmost thoughts; and in spite of all her filial affection, Alice shrank from the cold, gray, stone-like appearance of her father—his clothes, complexion, and half-grizzled hair, blending strangely into a leaden-like hue, so that he might have been mistaken for one of the carved figures escaped from its niche in the old abbey.

'You must have much to occupy your thoughts, when you do not even hear my approach, Alice,' and a frown came over the really fine intellectual brow of the otherwise plain face of the little miser.

'No, father,' said Alice confusedly; 'I was anxious for your return, and'—

'How long has your brother been gone?' questioned the miser in a tone which seemed to say: 'You had better speak truth, for I am aware of everything.'

'He stayed with me too late, I fear; for you know, father, he is compelled to be in barracks by nine o'clock.'

'His superiors are more privileged, I fancy?' said her father with a sarcastic and angry compression of the lips, which was full of meaning to poor Alice, who tremblingly remained silent. 'I don't mind the scorn of the world for myself, Alice, but I would rather see you dead—nay, be the cause of your death myself, than that it should be pointed at you. What did the vile wretches mean when they recognised me on the road just now, by hissing after me: "Sell your daughter for gold! leave your home that she may be an officer's lady?"'

'You know, father,' answered Alice evasively, 'we have many enemies, who would say anything to annoy you.'

'I know we have,' said the miser sadly; 'but this is a new torture! O Alice, if I thought you could encourage any one in my absence, you should soon look for my return in vain! The scanty savings I have pinched myself to accumulate, shall lie unbestowed, unclaimed; who knows where to find them? If you fall from the angelic purity of your childhood, Alice, I will make my grave in some ravine of the mountain or ditch by the wayside!' And the poor little miser sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and, for the first time in her life, Alice saw him shed tears. Her first impulse was to throw her arms round his neck, but she wished to check, not encourage the painful thoughts that agitated him; and for this purpose she said, in the hope of diverting his attention: 'There has been a message for you, father: you are to be at the George Inn by six o'clock to-morrow morning, to accompany a gentleman on a short journey.'

'I know,' said Cripplegait—to look into some

accounts.' [The miser was clever as an accountant, and made a good deal of money by arranging the entangled affairs of bankrupts or careless book-keepers.] 'But I do not think I shall go; you need my protection. I ought to have thought of my poor motherless girl—left helpless and friendless in this hovel! No, I shall not go.' Alice, who imagined her father would sink into despondency and die, if he gave up his usual avocations, now began, from duty, to urge his going—gradually awakening the ruling passion, avarice, by representing the profit, and their lack of money even for her slender housekeeping. This overcame his real anxiety for his daughter, and his affections were quickly transmuted into a hunger for gold.

On the following day, Alice, as usual, was left to herself, by the absence of her father; and having completed the work intrusted to her by the colonel's lady, hastened to take it home. On her way the colonel, who had always graciously given her a word or a nod, now passed without either, and yet Alice felt convinced he saw her. The work was received and paid for; and in answer to Alice's inquiry, as to when she should call for further instructions, she was told 'it would be unnecessary, as she would not be required again.' Poor Alice! scandal had done its worst. The colonel, it seems, was strolling down the road just as Captain Dinsley came out of the cottage the night before, and the colonel's man happened to be in the kitchen of the George Inn when the returned messenger was amusing the domestics at the expense of poor Alice by an account of his visit to Cripplegait's cottage, and encounter there with a drunken officer. This was a very pretty tale for the colonel's man to take to the lady's-maid, who of course communicated it to her mistress, which, combined with the colonel's own personal observation, was powerful evidence against the unfortunate girl.

Alice, who had often suffered slights and taunts on account of her father, was not likely, all at once, to attribute these symptoms of disrespect to their true cause. She could not conceive such wickedness in the minds of people, as to condemn so hastily one so utterly blameless as herself; but the conviction was forced upon her when her brother, flushed and angry, entered the cottage in the evening. 'Alice, he said in great excitement, "swear to me, by the purity of our mother's memory, and your hope of meeting her in heaven, that Captain Dinsley was not here by your connivance last night!"'

'Who is so unjust as to say so?' asked Alice, in alarm at her brother's frenzied state.

'Everybody!' bitterly exclaimed Edward. 'I was taunted to-day on parade with the chance of promotion through my sister's pretty face!'

'You should not heed their evil tongues; it will bring mischief on us all.'

'It will bring disgrace upon us all. But I will force Captain Dinsley to give the lie to their infamous assertions before the whole regiment. What is his life or mine either compared with your fair fame?' said the fiery young soldier; and he rose as if inclined to put his threat into execution without further delay.

'You shall not leave me, Edward,' said Alice, clinging to him, 'until you promise to abandon these rash intentions: 'tis madness! Let them talk; it matters little, conscious as I am of my own innocence.'

'And yet the colonel says he was passing along the road when Captain Dinsley came out of this cottage last night.'

'I am not aware that I ever even saw such a person,' said Alice, availing herself of her ignorance of the name of her visitor to evade Edward's anger.

'Then swear solemnly that you saw no one after I quitted you last night.'

'Edward, this is folly. I received a message for my father some time after you left me—and'—

'This evasion will not serve. Beware, Alice, of my believing you guilty. I have often blushed for my father; I will never blush for my sister. You shall take this oath!' and with a strong arm he was forcing her on her knees, when a knocking at the door, blended with the voices of children calling 'Miss Alice! Miss Alice!' made him pause.

'Oh,' said the children entering, 'Oh, Miss Alice, your father's hurt.'

'Oh! where, where is he?' frantically asked Alice, rushing towards the door.

'A man's bringing him down the lane,' said the elder boy. 'We were late on the sea-shore, gathering a lot of coal and sticks after the spring-tide, with granny; and coming home, granny said: "There's Miss Alice's father, something's happened to him. Miss Alice is always kind to us, run and break the news to her that her father's hurt;" and so we did, miss—and that's all.' And away scampered the children, just as a person turned the corner of the lane close by the cottage door, bearing the body of the old man in his arms. The stranger waved Edward aside, who had hastened out on the first intimation of the children, and suffered no one to touch his burden until he deposited it carefully and gently on the small white curtained bed of Alice. What, then, was the surprise of the brother and sister to find that the rescuer of their father was Captain Dinsley!

The old man had been returning from his journey, and was hastening home, when, at a lonely part of the road, he was attacked by two ruffians, who doubtless supposed the miser to have great wealth on his person. Madly eager to retain possession of the earnings of that day, and possibly of many more, the old man made a desperate resistance, but was ultimately overpowered, stabbed, and felled to the ground; when Captain Dinsley, who was accidentally within hearing, rushed to his assistance, and encountering the ruffians, after a severe conflict, in which dangerous wounds were given and received, succeeded in disabling both, and leaving them expiring on the ground, lifted the old man, and found that it was the father of Alice whom he had rescued: but, alas! too late.

The undivided attention of all was now given to the old man, who seemed to be dying; but the young officer, hoping that help might not come too late, hastened to the barracks for the surgeon. In a few minutes they returned, Dinsley thoughtfully taking the precaution of bringing wine with him, a little of which administered to the patient seemed to give consciousness and strength. 'Alice, my daughter!' were the first words he uttered on recognising her pale face watching over him. 'Do you weep for me, my child?' he said, as he felt her tears dropping fast upon him. 'Pray for me, Alice; I have sinned; I have dragged you through scorn and poverty. But it was all for you at last!' he added with sudden energy, raising himself in the bed; when, seeing Edward, he feebly grasped his hand: 'My son, guard your sister; take her from hence, from these crumbling walls, where thieves may break through and steal. Take her to the city; I've gold, plenty of gold! Yes,' said he triumphantly, 'my child shall go to the city, to the "great city, where the wall is of jasper and the city of pure gold!" And with this mysterious association of avarice, affection, and religion, the miser fell back and expired.

Captain Dinsley, who, during the miser's dying exclamations, had been leaning on the corner of the bed with his eyes fixed on Alice, now, to increase the distress of the scene, suddenly turned deadly pale, and with a heavy groan sank motionless to the ground—a wound received in the conflict, which he had contrived to stanch with his handkerchief, and which the strong excitement of the scene had enabled him hitherto to disregard, having broken out afresh. Alice, who with

the stone-like composure of despair had been silently bending over her father's corpse, at this fresh calamity seemed to find a species of relief, or at least a mitigation of woe, by having her attention directed to a new claimant upon her sympathy—or, did she at the moment discover and betray a secret lurking unconsciously in her heart? At all events, she rushed to the spot with a scream, and lifted the head of the sufferer, while the surgeon attempted to bind up the still gushing wound. The motion brought back a temporary life and consciousness; he opened his eyes, and meeting those of Alice, a faint smile illumined his wan features, as he feebly articulated: 'Alice, have I atoned?' and relapsed into insensibility.

Five years after the circumstances above narrated, a lady with two very lovely children hastened joyfully across the lawn in front of a noble mansion in the north of England, to meet two gentlemen who were alighting from a carriage at the lodge gate.

'O papa! papa!' shouted the boy, delightedly running forward.

'And,' asked the little girl, who was clinging to her mamma's gown—'is the other gentleman Uncle Edward?'

'Yes, darling,' said the lady; and in an instant she was in the arms of her brother.

'Well, Alice,' said her husband, 'I told you Edward would arrive to-day. The coach stopped just as I drove up. And now allow me to present—not Lieutenant Wheately, but Captain Wheately.'

'Yes,' said Edward, as the Gazette has it, 'Vice Henry Dinsley retired.'

'Oh, I assure you,' said Dinsley, 'I find quite enough to do, on succeeding to my father's estate, in taking care of my tenants and these little sprites!' and he caught up the girl, who seemed to be his especial favourite.

'But,' said the boy, not at all jealous of his sister—'I'm going to be a soldier with papa's gun, and grand-papa left plenty of money to buy me a commission.'

And in due time the commission was bought; and when the boy, after fighting bravely for his country, attained high honour and rank in his profession, there were few left to remember that this great man was the grandson of Little Cripplegait the Miser.

PROGRESS OF THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

So rapid has been the extension of electro-telegraphic communication throughout the world, that we might almost fancy the subtle agent had something to do with its own propagation. Gunpowder took a century or two to make the tour of Europe and prove its superiority to bows and arrows; and steam-engines panted and puffed for many a year before the world thought it worth while to turn them to account. How different the progress of the electric telegraph! It was in 1837 that Wheatstone took out his first patent, and its first application in this country was made on the short railway from London to Blackwall.

Now, as appears by the Electric Telegraph Company's Report, we have nearly 6000 miles of telegraph, comprising more than 21,000 miles of wire—almost enough to stretch round the globe; and for the dispatch-service, there are 150 stations besides those in London. From the central office behind the Bank of England, communications are established with all parts of the kingdom, along the lines of railway, and messages may be sent at any hour of the day or night. The railway business alone keeps the telegraph clerks pretty actively employed; and when to this are added the messages from government and the general public, some idea may be formed of the amount of work to be done. During the elections of 1852, the state of the poll at every hour was transmitted to head-quarters.

More than 10,000 such messages were sent in that short but eventful period. Sporting gentlemen all over the kingdom are now informed of the result of a race soon after the winning-horse has come to the post. The state of the weather is flashed to London every day from numerous localities for publication in a morning paper; and whenever desirable, the information can be obtained from twenty of the furthest off stations in the country within half an hour. A fashionable dame at the West End having set her heart on a villa in the sunny environs of Florence, her lord hired it for her by a telegraphic message. On the top of the office in the Strand, a time-ball indicates one o'clock to the whole neighbourhood simultaneously with the ball on the observatory at Greenwich, and a clock erected on a pillar in the street opposite tells Greenwich time by the same apparatus. It is under consideration to establish a similar contrivance at different parts of the coast, so as to enable the masters of vessels to get the true time while on their way to port; and in foggy weather, the electric spark is to fire a cannon precisely at one o'clock, instead of dropping a ball. Soon we shall have to report, that the difference of longitude between the observatories of Greenwich and Paris has been determined by telegraph. The difference as at present known is nine minutes, twenty seconds and a half: should it be confirmed, it will say something for the accuracy of past observations.

The prospect of profit appears so good, that the United Kingdom Electric Telegraph Company are going to work in earnest. Their wires will be laid underground in pipes, following generally the turnpike-roads; and they propose to lease the exclusive use of a wire to any one desiring it. Seeing that one house alone, in London, pays £1000 a year for telegraphic messages, there is good reason to believe that a wire may be rented with benefit to both parties. The company have engaged the services of Mr Wheatstone, and intend to send shilling messages, and have thus possessed themselves of two elements of success—ability and cheapness. Already an underground telegraph is laid on the old turnpike-road from London to Dover, and it is by this that those brief but important paragraphs of news from the continent which appear in the morning papers are transmitted. Not only are the railway stations of the metropolis connected with each other by underground wires, but the Post-office, Admiralty, and other government offices, the chief station of police, the Houses of Parliament, and some of the leading clubs, are also interwired. The authorities can now send orders, quick as thought, to detain a mail-packet, to despatch a frigate from any of the outports, or expedite equipments at the dockyards. Gentlemen sitting at dinner in the Reform Club in Pall Mall, have instantaneous notice every quarter of an hour of what is going on in 'the House,' so as to enable them to know whether they may take another glass of wine before 'going down,' or not.

Most of this progress has been accomplished since 1850, as also the laying down of the under-sea communications. It was in August 1850, that the possibility of sending a message through the Straits of Dover was demonstrated, as though to stimulate ingenuity, for the wire was broken by an unfortunate accident, and the work delayed for many months. The experiment was repeated towards the close of 1851 with entire success, which has not been once interrupted. Future historians will perhaps be struck by the fact, that the first news sent by the wire was of the famous *coup d'état* of the 2d December. If it was then remarked that England had lost her insular position, what shall be said now, when we have a second wire running to Middelkirk, near Ostend, and a third from Orfordness to Scheveningen on the Dutch coast, 119 miles in length? The latter wire was worthily inaugurated on the 14th June last, by the flashing across of the king

of Holland's opening speech to his Chambers. Then there are two wires across the Irish Channel; and a third is talked of, to run from the Mull of Cantyre to Fairhead. Ireland, too, is less insulated than before. By means of these under-sea wires, we can now communicate with most parts of the continent. The Dutch line gives us the shortest route to Copenhagen; and now that wires are sunk across the Great and Little Belts, we can hold telegraphic talk with the Danish capital. Through the Belgian wire, we reach Prussia, thence to Cracow and Warsaw, and on to St Petersburg; or we may diverge the course of the message to Vienna, and have it forwarded to Trieste, 325 miles further, where it will overtake the Indian mail. The czar is stretching wires from St Petersburg to Moscow, and to his ports on the Baltic and Black Seas; and before long, when he wants to quarrel with the sultan, he will be able to do so with less delay than at present. The Turk, on his part, is thinking he would like to have a telegraph; and should he realise his wishes, Muscovite and Moslem may intercommunicate with equal celerity. Perth on the Tay may now, if she will, hold a 'crack' with Pesth on the Danube; and Manchester ask Marseille for the earliest quotations of Egyptian cotton.

At first, most of the German wires were laid underground, but in many places those stretched on posts have been substituted, as more generally servicable. They are no longer confined to the railways, but are carried by such routes as are most suitable; and soon the miles of telegraph will outnumber those of railways. Austria has about 4000 miles of telegraph, and the other parts of Germany about as many. The wires are penetrating the valleys of Switzerland, and creeping up the slopes of the Alps: Spain has found out their use, but to a very limited extent: Italy has a few score miles; and in Piedmont, Mons. Borelli, the engineer, has done wonders with them. While waiting the completion of the railway between Turin and Genoa, it was thought desirable to connect the two cities by telegraph; and to effect this, the wires are carried over precipitous steeps, stretched across valleys nearly a mile in width, and buried in some places, where no other mode was possible. The way in which the difficulties of the ground are overcome is said to excel anything similar in Europe.

The Italian wires are to be connected with Corsica and Sardinia by lines sunk in the dividing channels; and from the southernmost cape of Sardinia they will be carried to Africa, striking the mainland a few miles west of Tunis, from which point it will not be difficult to reach Algeria, Egypt, and ultimately India. One stage, from the Nile to the Red Sea, will ere long be complete; and in India itself preparations are being made for the construction of 3000 miles of telegraph.

The establishment of the electric telegraph in France has been slower than in other countries; but there are now lines which radiate from Paris to Bordeaux, Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse, Havre, Dieppe, Calais, and Strasbourg; and by the close of the present year, the chief towns of each department will be connected with the Ministry of the Interior. The government is master of all the lines; by way of Strasbourg they now reach Germany independently of Belgium; and in that city the French office and the Baden offices are side by side. Besides their own private dispatches, no secret messages are sent, except certain diplomatic matters, and the news brought by the Indian mail to Marseille. The latter is at once flashed onwards to London. Paris time is adopted on the lines all over France.

The vast extent of the United States has caused a greater extension of the telegraph than in any other country: it is now but little short of 30,000 miles, including Canada. There are two direct lines from Philadelphia to New Orleans. Projects are talked of, one of them sanctioned by Congress, for lines from

Natchez, on the Mississippi, to San Francisco, a distance of 3000 miles; and from Vera Cruz to Acapulco, and from Missouri to Oregon, with a post of cavalry at every twenty miles to guard the wires, and ride with dispatches. Another is to annex Cuba by means of a wire sunk across the channel which separates that island from Florida: it will need to be strong to resist the action of the Gulf-stream, which there flows with great rapidity. In New York and Boston all the fire-stations are connected by telegraph, and alarms are made known with a promptitude that averts much mischief. Private telegraphs, too, are greatly used in the large trading towns.

Much has been said by projectors about an under-sea telegraph to America; but it is a question whether in such a distance the currents generated in the wire by natural causes would not prove fatal to the transmission of an impulse from one extremity to the other. Some physicists believe that the experiment would not succeed from Galway to Newfoundland, which is not more than half the breadth of the Atlantic; and they state the practicable route to be by crossing Behring's Strait; or to run a wire from the Shetlands to the Faroes and Iceland, thence to Greenland, and on to Labrador and Nova Scotia. This task, however, remains for future enterprise, and will some day form an important chapter in the history of the electric telegraph.

THE POETRY OF ROBERT BROWNING.

It has been customary, with what amount of correctness we will not stay to inquire, to speak of the 'schools of the poets.' The expression has, perhaps, been more directly applied to modern English writers than to any others; and if we are to believe that, generally speaking, they can be classed into so many grand divisions, each presided over by a powerful influential mind, we must of necessity consider somewhat in the light of outlaws those whose works give no indication of submission to such control. One of these is Robert Browning, certainly among the most remarkable of living English poets, and to whom Walter Savage Landor—one whose compliments are rare—has paid the graceful tribute of admiration expressed in these lines:

Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walked along our roads with step
More active, more inquiring eye, or tongue
More varied in discourse.

If Mr Browning is thus appreciated by one of the greatest of his contemporaries, he does not, however, enjoy the popularity which men of much less genius have acquired; nor is he even known to many of those who are really lovers of poetry.

Were this altogether the fault of the poet himself, we might almost infer that the world was nothing the worse for its ignorance of him. He is only partially to blame, however; for while some of his works are sufficiently obscure to deter even the most refined reader, and far too much so over to become popular in any sense whatever, the greater part of them are really very beautiful, of a highly original character, and deserving of a very wide circulation. They are simple enough to be understood in everything that constitutes them sources of enjoyment—no ordinary recommendation, when we see how largely some in our day act upon Wordsworth's contentment—'to enjoy the things which others understand.' They require no other faculty than that which the most ordinary reader brings to bear upon the perusal of our best known English writers; and if we could forget that Robert Browning had written anything but one or two fine dramatic poems, and a series of still finer lyrical ones, we should be wholly at a loss to understand why he is not as well known as any writer of our times. We

cannot, however, shut our eyes to the fact, that he has taken great liberties with the public, and even with that portion of it who readily appreciate the most subtle and refined kind of poetry. The author of *Paracelsus* put forth strong claims on the attention of all who could perceive and enjoy the most delicate and beautiful expressions of poetic genius. That work was eminently calculated to awaken hopes of something very noble and powerful in the future; but when Mr Browning chose to address himself to a small—we should say, a very small circle, in his *Sordello*, rather than to fulfil the promise of his first essay, it was very natural that something like dissatisfaction should have been felt by his admirers. Subsequent writings deepened this dissatisfaction into an impression that the poet had abandoned altogether the intention of writing intelligibly, or of making himself heard, as the poet ought to be; and as the public is little disposed to give itself trouble about understanding poetry which it cannot feel, much that he has since written has been received with a certain degree of jealousy—certainly not with that frank admiration to which a large portion of it is entitled.

It has always been admitted by those whom, in the above sentence, we have dignified by the application of the term public, that Mr Browning is a writer of undoubted genius. Even in his most obscure productions, there have always been evidences of that; but the complaint is, that he has frequently marred the expressions of that genius by conceits and affected quaintnesses in the structure of his poems, not less than in the style and the language of them. Thus, in his dramas, he has chosen some of the most singular and meaningless titles: *Pipa Passes* is the name he gives to one, in which there are many passages of great power. Although this drama is strongly marked by dramatic force, its structure wholly unfits it for representation. Its title is taken from the circumstance of a little factory-girl passing the abodes of guilt and crime, of fierce passion and terrible remorse; yet, upon this slight basis, so to speak, Mr Browning has brought together an amount of vigorous characterisation, a deep knowledge of the human heart's outgoings, and an exuberance of fancy not often to be met with in a single modern poem. *The Soul's Tragedy* is another curious title to a work which the author does not profess even to call a dramatic poem; but which, amid much that is obscure, and a great deal that is not generally sought for in a poem—namely, deep and philosophic thought—contains many passages of beautiful poetry. *Colombe's Birthday*, a play which, after having been considered unfit for the stage for several years, has recently been successfully performed, is more in keeping with the established rules of dramatic composition. It is a tale of love and romance—almost equal in these characteristics to the incident of the ballad which tells how 'King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid.' There is a chivalrous spirit about, and at the same time a generous appreciation of, the nobility of nature, which gives it at once a pleasing and ennobling influence.

The Blot on the Scutcheon is another of Mr Browning's dramatic works of the orthodox character. It has already been represented, but not successfully; for, as in the case of the other, the characters are drawn with delicacy rather than breadth of outline, and the subject is scarcely fitted to affect a miscellaneous audience. This tragedy abounds, too, with very beautiful poetry. There is one lyric in it—a song or serenade sung to the hapless heroine—which we have always admired for a combination of sweetness and quaintness, not unlike that which distinguishes some of the old Elizabethan lyrics, although the rhythm is a specimen of Mr Browning's peculiar fancy for strange cadences.

Mr Browning has published two other tragedies—one entitled *The Return of the Druses*, and the other *Luria*.

The latter is perhaps his most powerful work of its class, and contains an amount of dramatic energy which none of his other compositions exhibit. We content ourselves, however, with a mere passing reference to these things; and taking it for granted that his early poem *Paracelsus* is better known to the reader of poetry than we could make it by a few short extracts, we turn to his lyrics and ballads, which seem to us better fitted than any of his more elaborate productions, to obtain for him an introduction to those who have not hitherto been acquainted with his writings. These, together with some of the dramas which we have alluded to, made their appearance originally in numbers—rather a novel way of publishing original poetry—under the quaint, and by no means intelligible title, of *Bells and Pomegranates*. If Mr Browning's object in publishing these poems as he did was at all akin to the object of cheap publications generally, they must have been a very signal failure. Judging of them as they so appeared, we can scarcely think it possible that any ordinary reader who bought one number would be likely to complete the set. By the ordinary reader, we mean the man of average intelligence and taste; for we have no doubt that some to whom Mr Browning's peculiar poetical numbers had their charm would appreciate their cheapness, and buy them fast enough. His worst faults—these are his obscurity, and his partiality for every kind of odd rhyme—are found combined with his finest qualities as a ballad-writer in the compositions now referred to. In one page, you will find a certain number of verses evidently strung together at random—so jagged and disjointed in their measure, or so obscure in their allusions, that it is impossible to read them through with anything like satisfaction; in the next page, however, and under some singular title, a really powerful line will strike you; and on turning over another page, you find a poem beautiful alike as a conception and as an artistic production—full of fire, and carrying you onward with the fine impetuosity of genius. A poem of considerable length, entitled *The Flight of the Duchess*, is a good example of this; but as no idea of it can be given by a short extract, we prefer quoting a few lines from a very noble lyric, entitled *The Lost Leader* :—

We shall march prospering—not through his presence;
Songs may inspire us—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done, while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.
Blot out his name, then—record one lost soul more:
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod—
One more triumph for devils, and sorrow for angels—
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins; let him never come back to us!
There will be doubt, hesitation, and pain—
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Aim at our heart ere we pierce through his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait for us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first at the throne.

Mr Browning is perfectly justified, we conceive, in calling his ballads and lyrical pieces, *Dramatic Romances*, for there can be no question as to dramatic force being the leading characteristic of his poetry generally. Whether he assumes the dialogue form or not, the spirit of dramatic writing is almost always to be found in his compositions. There is little of the descriptive, properly so called, about them, for action seems to be the fundamental idea; and while the characters, whether in his plays or his lyrics, never go out of their way to give us an account of any anterior circumstances, they frequently furnish us with strokes of the most vivid description. These, however, are given strictly in connection with the immediate business on hand. We may illustrate this by extracting a few verses from one of his most vigorous poems, entitled *How they brought*

the Good News from Ghent to Aix. It matters little what the news here referred to purported, the fine idea of rapidity given in the measure, and the broad outlines of a picture so boldly dashed out, are proofs of no ordinary artistic power. One of the couriers is understood to narrate the incidents of the perilous ride, and he does it with a rollicking freedom particularly characteristic.

'I sprang to the stirrup, and Ioris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
'Good speed!' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
undrew;

'Speed!' echoed the walls to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace—
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place.
I turned in my saddle, and made its girths tight;
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right;
Rebucked the check-strap, chained slacker the bit;
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lockeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Duffel, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mechlin church-steeple, we heard the half
chime;

So Ioris broke silence with: 'Yet there is time.'

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper, Roland, at last
With resolute shoulders each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland the spray.'

The steeds of Dirck and Ioris break down, and Roland
is left

'To bear the whole weight

Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall;
Shook off both my jackboots, let go belt and all;
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise bad or
good,

Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news to
Ghent.'

Now, we think this poem is one of a strikingly original character. In fact, we do not remember to have seen anything in our language which so fully conveys the idea indicated in its title. The artistic consistency of the measure is perfect; and not even in Burger's ballads do we find anything surpassing it in vigorous expression. Nor is this all; there is a fine truthful feeling pervading it, while the lines we have italicised stand out in their imaginative strength like actual pictures before the eye. In a poem, entitled *Saul*, still in an incomplete form, Mr Browning gives us more manifest proofs of his imaginative power. The verses profess to give David's account of his visit to the king of Israel when the evil spirit was upon him; and the picture given of the monarch shuddering as the darkness passes from his soul at the sound of the shepherd's harp, is a very forcible one.

But we must pass on, to give the reader some idea of the poet's humour, which is of a particularly quaint and racy kind, expressed in oddities of rhyme, as well as in curious and out-of-the-way fancies. There is an excellent example of this in a ballad, entitled *The Pied*

Piper of Hamelin—a metrical version of an old German story, shewing how the town was freed from a plague of rats by the notes of a mysterious piper's reed, and the disastrous consequences which ensued from the said musician being refused his promised recompense of a thousand guilders. After proclaiming to the nonplussed and terrified corporation his ability to rid the town of the living nuisance—

Into the street the piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic sleight
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled;
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe had uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling,
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling,
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats;
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats;
Grave old plodders, gray young friskers;
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins;
Cocking tails, and pricking whiskers;
Families by tens and dozens;
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished,
Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript had cherished)
To Ratland home his commentary,
Which was: 'At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out: "O rats rejoice!
The world is grown one vast dyslattery;
So munch on, crunch on, take your nunchion,
Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon!"
And just as a bulky sugar-punchoon,
All ready staved, like a great sun, shone
Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said: "Come, bore me!"
I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

The town is cleared, but the piper's reward is denied him, and again his wondrous instrument is heard in the street; this time, however, with a very different result—for all the children of the ungrateful burghers follow the mystic musician into a gateway which suddenly opens in a hillside. All, did we say? No, not all: one little lame boy could not dance after the piper the whole of the way; and in after-years he says—and there is a beautiful touch of feeling in the passage:—

'It's dull in our town since my playmates left;
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the piper also promised me:
For he led us, he said, to a glorious land,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped, and I stood still,
Left alone against my will—
To go on limping as before,
And never hear of that country more.'

There may be some who deem a poem like this somewhat too childish to elicit anything but a certain amount of amusement at the writer's freakish fancy. With such we will not stop to discuss the question, as to whether the art that can convey moral lessons and touches of genuine feeling in connection with ludicrous or marvellous incidents is to be considered childish, but will merely remark, that the superior wisdom which rejects *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, must also require us to cast aside almost all those simple creations of genius which form so much of the literary treasures of England and Germany. There are other examples of Mr Browning's peculiar humour which might be quoted—one of them, in particular, shewing us how he revenged himself on a pedantic author by dropping his learned treatise into the crevice of a plum-tree, and sticking a toadstool in his chapter six; but we have already given the reader enough to shew that his writings are worthy of being much better known than they have hitherto been, were they recommended by nothing more than their quaint originality. They have far higher recommendations, however, evincing, as they do, poetic genius of no common order. It ought not, we think, to be concluded, that because that genius has expressed itself in other than the ordinary forms of poetical composition, it is less likely to secure the attention of general readers. It has already been shown, we hope, that some of Mr Browning's best poetry is as simple as it is beautiful; and we have no hesitation in saying, that it will yet be better known, and that the obscurities, affectations, and whimsicalities will be pardoned for the sake of the true and sometimes lofty poetry his works contain.

We have taken no notice of Mr Browning's latest work, *Christmas-eve and Easter-day*; for although it contains, in fuller measure, perhaps, than any of his other writings, those evidences of strong originality to which we have already referred, the subject is one of which we cannot properly give an outline. It is a metaphysical and essentially religious poem, though partaking to a very slight degree of the character of religious poetry generally. It is too full of close and subtle reasoning ever to be popular; for while it combines much that is striking in thought and imagery, with a high tone of devotional feeling, it has depths of spiritual experience into which the ordinary reader of poetry will scarcely be inclined to go.

A PEEP INTO AN ITALIAN INTERIOR.

SECOND ARTICLE.*

I DID not tire of my life in Ancona, as my friends in Florence had predicted. There was something so quaint, so unlike anything I had ever before known, in the people among whom I found myself, and they formed such a contrast to the busy, practical sphere in which I had been brought up, that for the sake of novelty alone, I should have been amused at the change. I hope, however, I had some better motive than mere curiosity to interest me. I had always felt a sympathy for the Italians, and resented the indiscriminate abuse with which it is the fashion to assail them; but, until the opportunity for personal observation I now enjoyed, I had not understood how many of their failings may be ascribed to their erroneous system of marriage, their defective method of education, and other social evils—evils so deeply rooted, that it will require a complete upheaving of the existing framework of society to destroy their baneful influence.

It was not long before I was enabled to see how matches were made up according to the most orthodox system; for the marriage of the niece of a lady whom

* Continued from No. 455.

we often saw—our little friend who disliked country walks so much—was being negotiated, and we were daily informed of the progress of affairs. The young lady was not residing in Ancona, but at Macerata, a town about forty miles distant; and, being an orphan, and not largely dowered, her establishment had been a matter of considerable anxiety to her relations, particularly to her grandmother, with whom she lived.

'Congratulate me,' said the contessa with a beaming face one morning: 'mamma writes me she has great hopes of a *partito* for our poor Isotta.'

'I am very glad, indeed,' said my cousin Lucy, who was always the chief spokeswoman, being the eldest daughter of the house, and of a sedate and prudent turn, which suited her mature age of one-and-twenty—'I am very glad, indeed, to hear this; and what does Isotta say?'

'Oh, she knows nothing about it yet; mamma is making the necessary inquiries, and will then settle everything with the young man's father, old Conte G—, the brother of our cardinal here. Up to the present moment, a mutual friend, who first originated the idea, has been the only channel of communication.'

'And if your niece should not chance to like him?' I suggested.

Our little friend lifted up her eyes in astonishment as she replied: 'Not like a person her grandmamma approves! Of course she will be pleased!' and then reverting to the great topic of interest on such occasions, she said: 'If, as we hope, all will be soon arranged, mamma will have a great deal to do in ordering the *corredo*. It is to be a very handsome one, for the *sposo's* family are known to be very particular in such things; and, naturally, we, on our side, do not wish to cut a bad figure.'

I asked her some of the details respecting this same *corredo*, or wedding-outfit, and she gave me a list of such supplies of linen and every description of wearing-apparel, as appeared extravagant in proportion to the young lady's fortune, which was only 12,000 dollars* (about £2400), an average dowry in this part of Italy. If the sum ascends as high as 20,000 dollars, it is considered large; but in any case the *corredo* has likewise to be provided, at an expense often of 2000 dollars (£400), or even upwards. This outlay, however, is not felt, as a certain sum is always destined for each child from its infancy, and large stores of linen and damask table-services are gradually accumulated, in expectation of the great event. The greatest luxury is perhaps displayed in petticoats, night-dresses, and such gear, which are of the finest materials, often trimmed with rich lace and embroidered, and are to be counted by sixes of dozens of each kind. In fact, their number is so great, that it is one of the anxieties of an Italian woman's life to look after her hoards of linen, and see that all is kept properly assorted and in good order. Nor is this ambition for a handsome *corredo* confined to the upper classes, it is shared alike by all; descending even to the humblest peasant-girl, who is scarcely out of her leading-strings before she thinks of laying by for this long-coveted possession.

But to return to the young lady whose fate was being decided. Two or three days after, her aunt came to announce that all was settled; that both Isotta and

the young count had expressed themselves perfectly satisfied, and their first meeting was to take place the following evening, in presence of all the members of the two families residing at Macerata.

'Poor girl! What a nervous affair it will be!' I said. 'What is the ceremonial to be observed?'

'Why,' said the contessa quite gravely, 'I do not exactly know; mamma does not mention in her letter: it depends on circumstances. Generally the *sposo* merely comes forward, is presented to the young lady, and makes a low bow. Sometimes, if the families previously have been intimately acquainted, he is directed to kiss her hand; and lastly—but this is very rare!—and she lowered her voice—'it is only adopted where there is the oldest friendship or relationship subsisting—the gentleman salutes his bride upon the cheek.'

Amused as I was by this account, I could not help thinking it must be exaggerated, or at least that these courtships, whose programme was as accurately defined as a state ceremony, must be restricted to a few rare instances; but I found this was not the case, and that the contessa had merely stated what was usual in every family of the nobility of Ancona and the adjacent towns. In many instances, I afterwards learned, the preliminaries for the marriage of a young lady were all settled before she left the walls of the convent where she had been brought up, her wedding taking place within eight days of her return to her parents' house; but this, though esteemed highly desirable, cannot always be arranged.

As a general rule, girls are kept excessively retired until some *partito* has been found, everything being done to foster the impression that their speedy settlement in life is to be the signal for their admission into all the pleasures of society, from which, in the meantime, they are sedulously excluded. Dressed with scrupulous plainness, seldom or never taken into company, rarely appearing out of doors except for a drive in a close carriage, or to go to mass, or to call on some old female relation—without the advantages of a cultivated mind or literary resources—the condition of an Italian unmarried woman is as cheerless and insignificant as it is possible to conceive. Small marvel is it, then, that at the first mention of a suitor, a girl's thoughts should fly to all the fine dresses she will possess, to the becoming *coiffures* she will adopt, and—should her imagination have ever ranged so far—to the liberty of speech and action she will be entitled to enjoy. Not a thought is given to the disposition, tastes, or habits of the person to whom she is soon to be irrevocably united; he is accepted as the condition indispensable to the attainment of all that has been so earnestly desired.

The scene of the first introduction generally takes place with the formality the little contessa described, very rarely going beyond a stately bow and courtesy exchanged between the betrothed. After this interview, the gentleman is every evening expected to pay a visit of an hour or so at the house of his *promessa*, all the members of her family, and the old friends who compose the usual *società*, being present. He is not placed next to her, nor is he to address himself particularly to her. Should he feel inclined to venture on a remark, she will answer in monosyllables with downcast eyes, never moving from the sofa on which she sits bolt upright by her mother's side. After a week or so has elapsed, it is an understood thing that he

* The estimate here given is at the rate of five dollars to the pound sterling, but it varies according to the exchange, which is sometimes 4s. 3d. to the dollar.

should ask for her portrait, and give her his own in return. At this stage of proceedings, he is allowed to kiss her hand on presenting the miniature; and on succeeding evenings he brings her a nosegay, but without any repetition of this privilege; meanwhile the bride-elect is very complacently occupied in knitting him a purse, or embroidering him a smoking-cap, or something of that sort—whatever she is told is customary, in fact—and finally goes to the altar without a thought upon the duties and responsibilities of her new condition.

Even their manner of celebrating a wedding is very different from ours. No bridesmaids are ever seen, for it would not be considered in good taste for any girls to be present at the religious ceremony; neither do they take part in the great dinner which closes the day. The newly-married pair do not go into the country, or set out upon a journey, but at once enter into possession of the apartments destined for them in the house of the bridegroom's family.

My uncle used laughingly to quote a remark, made to him by a lady in reply to some observation on the contrast thus afforded to an English wedding-tour: 'It may be all very well for your nation, who make marriages of sentiment, *caro mio signore*, but I confess that to any of us this prolonged *tête-à-tête* with a husband whom one knows nothing at all of, would be tedious in the extreme.' To avoid being thrown upon this terrible companionship, the first week or so of the young *spouse's* married life is fully taken up in receiving the congratulatory visits of her friends and acquaintances; after which, she and her husband make what is called the first *sortita* together, go to hear mass, call upon every one in due form, and are considered fairly started in their new position. The dingy Palazzo subsides into its wonted monotony; and the young couple, with no interest or authority in the house, treated like mere children, are expected to conform to the hours and habits of the old people, who, having yielded the same submission in their day, are by no means backward in exacting it themselves.

We knew a family, that of the Marchese G—, one of the most ancient and wealthy in Ancona, where the eldest son, though upwards of thirty-six, and married for more than ten years, was not at liberty to invite any friend of his own to the family-table without his father's permission; neither could he nor his wife, for any convenience of their own, anticipate or retard the fixed hour for dinner, or order that meal to be served in their apartments. All their expenditure was regulated for them, a pair of carriage-horses kept at their disposal, their servants' wages paid; even their subscription to the theatre provided for, and a sum assigned for their dress and pocket-money—being twenty dollars a month to the heir of this noble house, and to his wife fifteen. This was considered very liberal. All the disposal of the income of the family—very large in reference to the country; it was reported to be nearly 20,000 dollars (£4000) a year—all insight into the accounts and expenditure, was exclusively reserved for the old marchese, who would have resented any hint or advice from his son as unwarrantable interference.

Another strange species of coercion that seemed generally kept up in families of this stamp, was in the selection of Christian names for the younger branches. It is not an uncommon thing to hear a young mother lament the uncouth appellations bestowed upon her offspring, and saying, with a shrug of the shoulders: 'But what is to be done? It is an old family name, and my *suocera* would have it.'

The vexatious tyranny exercised by the mother-in-law, the *suocera*, has almost passed into a proverb, as the source of innumerable evils; yet such is the force of custom amongst the Italians, that if a son were possessed of independent fortune, and established himself away from the paternal roof, he would be exclaimed

against as *infatigabile* in the extreme. I could tell of many sad instances of unhappiness produced by the *suocera's* influence. In the first place, she is almost invariably ignorant, prejudiced, and bigoted; such being the characteristics of the greater part of Italian women, born and educated some fifty or sixty years ago, and sets her face stubbornly against everything that is not precisely according to her code, whether it relates to politics, the management of her household, or the treatment of her grandchildren. I heard a lady herself recount how she lost five children in succession, owing to their being sent out to be reared by rough peasant-women in the country. They were delicate infants, and could not stand the exposure and want of care to which they were subjected; and so they died off, one after the other, their poor mother vainly attempting to move the old *contessa* to allow her to have a wet-nurse in the house.

'In her day,' persisted the unrelenting woman, 'children were brought up in the country; and why should it be otherwise now?' and she had authority enough over her son, to compel him to resist his wife's piteous supplications. Often has she said: 'My five children were sacrificed to a *suocera's* power. She yielded at last, and I saved the sixth.'

Another lady, whom I saw much of, one of the handsomest women in Ancona, was in such subjection to her mother-in-law, that she dared not sit down in her presence unless invited to do so; and although the mother of a grown-up son, was as much looked after and interfered with as if she had been still a child. Sometimes her spirit rose, and she attempted to remonstrate, or invoked her husband's assistance, which was invariably the signal for his ordering his horse to be saddled, and going out for a ride—saying, he would have nothing to do with her quarrels with his mother. And this, and worse than this, is the true picture of an Italian Interior, where distrust, variance, and the weakening of domestic ties, are the fruits of the lamentable system I have attempted to describe; which is further perpetuated in the training of the rising generation in the same errors and intolerance.

Amongst those Italians whose minds have risen superior to the disadvantages that surround them, the subject of education is often anxiously discussed. One evening at my uncle's, we were conversing on this topic with the Conte Enrico A—, a highly intellectual and cultivated young man. He was a native of Ancona, but so far in advance of his towns-people, that he stood almost isolated amongst them. Even as an Englishman, he would have ranked high for mental acquirements, though all perhaps of too dreamy a cast. His was a sort of passive genius, which exhaled itself in poetry and melancholy reflections on the misery of his country, looking upon any individual exertion as impracticable. I think this want of energy in striving to carry out the superior workings of their intellect, is peculiar to most of the men of talent in Italy, and has been one of the causes of her present condition: had all united in the struggle for *rational* improvement, in which a few alone so conspicuous, the results would have been widely different.

On the evening in question, I remember he told us we were not half thankful enough, nor proud enough, of the privilege of being Englishwomen, nor sensible of the blessings which from our very cradles that name conferred.

'As soon as English children can distinguish one letter from another,' he said, 'books are put into their hands, which inculcate truth, honour, courage; and thus is laid the basis of that education which has made your nation what it is—the envy and wonder of Europe.'

'That reminds me of a plan we have often talked of,' said Lucy D—: 'it is that of translating some of our nice children's story-books, and getting them circulated through these States.'

'Ah! you forget,' he replied, shaking his head, 'that before teaching the children, you must educate the mothers of Italy; or else your efforts will be paralysed by the ignorance and folly that would be arrayed against you.'

'Besides, you forget,' said my uncle, looking up from his paper, 'that the mothers of Italy have very little to do with the education of their children: your convents and seminaries relieve them of that task.'

'Too true,' said the count. 'As our fathers and grandfathers did before us, so also must we; and that is why, at seven or eight years old, our boys are sent to Jesuit colleges; while our girls, at even an earlier age, are placed in nunneries, to learn from women perpetually secluded in the cloister, the duties that are to fit them for wives and mothers in the world.'

'Never even coming home for their holidays,' remarked my uncle. 'Strange that there should be people in existence who can consent to this unnecessary separation from their children for ten or eleven years. How the character may be worked upon, and all its fresh impulses destroyed, by this long period of unbroken influence!'

'But do they, then, never see their children?' I inquired.

'O yes, they may go and visit them,' he replied; 'but an interview of but an hour or so occasionally, is a very poor substitute for more unrestrained intercourse; besides, it often happens that the convent or college is at a considerable distance, and it does not suit people to be always travelling.'

'Talking of these visits,' said the count, 'reminds me of one I lately paid to Loretto, to see the eldest son of the Principe L——, a handsome, animated, and promising little fellow of nine years old, who had been placed at the Jesuits' College there about six months before. I could scarcely recognise the child. Without ill-usage, without any compulsory discipline, but simply by the steady workings of their wonderful method of compression, the boy's spirit and originality appeared to be as completely extinguished as if they had never existed. He had become grave, thoughtful beyond his age, with a little demure bland look, that seemed a reflection of the countenances of his priestly instructors. I horrified the ecclesiastic who was present during the interview, by rather maliciously asking the child, if he still continued to take as much interest as ever in all scientific and mechanical pursuits, and in reading of the recent discoveries. As the sworn upholder of a government that opposes railways, and laments the invention of printing, the priest was bound to express his surprise at the suggestion. "My child," said he, mildly addressing his pupil, "is it possible you ever thought thus? You have other tastes now." Tell the signor conte what you most wish to become.' The boy coloured, cast down his eyes, and murmured: "Un Latinista"—a Latin scholar. Anything like a love of aught relating to progression was a crime.'

There was some bitterness, but no exaggeration in what the young Anconitan related. The question of the Jesuits is purely a political one, they being supported by the party termed by the liberals *Oscurantisti* or *Codini*—the first name signifying literally obscurers, and the last derived from the queue worn by the gentlemen of the last century, and without which, to this day, upon the Italian stage, the portrait of a prejudiced obstinate old noble is incomplete. Families of these views esteem it, therefore, a point of conscience to intrust the education of their children to this order.

The college nearest Ancona is at Loretto, a distance of twenty miles; at which place, also, the French *Dames du Sacré Cœur* have a convent for young ladies, embracing much the same line of principles and course of tuition. It cannot be denied that, as respects general accomplishments and lady-like deportment, their pupils

infinitely surpass those of all other conventual establishments in Italy, where they barely learn to read, write, and embroider.

Those parents who hold more liberal opinions, are sorely perplexed as to the means of educating their sons. Sometimes they send them to Pisa or Sienna, at which last there used to be a college of some eminence, conducted on moderate principles by the *Padri Scolopi*; but of late years abuses have crept in, and it has greatly degenerated. Others, again, engage an abbé as tutor for the first few years, and then place them to complete their studies at Bologna; but at the conclusion of this academical career, unless a youth has more than average abilities, particularly if he belongs to the higher classes, the general range of his attainments may be rated as beneath mediocrity. Debarred by the prejudices of caste from entering any profession but the church, conscious that he will never have a field on which to display his abilities, without stimulus to exertion, or prospects for the future, the young noble seems to resign himself to the conviction, that his safest course is to vegetate unthinking, unquestioning, unknowing, and unknown.

The ignorance of some of these young patricians on all subjects of general information was perfectly startling. Many of them were quite unacquainted with the nature of tenets which had rent Europe asunder, or of the geographical position of neighbouring countries, or of the best known historical facts. Not having access to any easy literature, such as our magazines and miscellanies afford, owing to the extraordinary restrictions imposed upon the press, they had been left without an inducement to read, or an opportunity of discovering their own deficiency.

In illustration of these remarks, I cannot forbear quoting one or two instances, the first of which I heard my cousins relate.

During the wild excitement of the early part of 1849, a youthful count, glowing with new-born patriotism, confided to them one day that he and all the *Giovanti*,—that is, Young Ancona—had determined upon turning Protestant, in order to get rid of the *Prete*, and to conciliate England. Presently a shade of embarrassment came over his face, and he said: 'Pardon me; but now I think of it—tell me, do the Protestants believe in God?'

On one occasion, I was present when some conversation took place before a youth, fresh from Bologna, in which an allusion was made to Cleopatra and the asp. 'How can I know anything about these matters,' he exclaimed: 'I have never read the Bible!' Another time, I remember hearing my uncle gravely asked, in reference to a journey he was meditating, whether he meant to go by sea from Marseille to Paris?

It was melancholy in the extreme to see the number of young men thus idling away their lives, filling the cafés and casino, and subsisting on a stipend that an English younger son would consider inadequate to purchase gloves for the London season. The plan pursued is, to give each son an apartment in the family residence, his dinner, and the allowance of from ten to twelve dollars a month, which is to provide for his dress, his breakfast, the theatre, and cigars.

How they contrived, with these limited means, to keep up the appearance they did, is perfectly inexplicable; they even seemed able to gratify little harmless flights of fancy, such as coming out unexpectedly in singular suits of Brobdignagian checks, or startling green cut-aways, which, with a pair of luxuriant whiskers, a hasty determined walk, and a peculiar flourish of the stick, were supposed to constitute the faithful portraiture of an Englishman—than to resemble whom there could be no greater privilege, so great was the Angliomania that prevailed.

And now I fancy I hear the remark: All this time you have been describing the manners of the Italian

nobility. What are their gentry like—their middle classes?

But the answer to this inquiry would take up too much space at present. If my simple narration is considered of sufficient interest, I may enter upon this subject in a future number.

ARTS AND MANUFACTURES OF INDIA.

Is the Great Exhibition of 1851, every one was astonished with the variety and exquisite beauty of Indian manufactures—the show, indeed, having quite the effect of a revelation. Now, surprise is said to be only another term for ignorance; and it is not creditable to us, that we should have known so little of practical art in India—an art not traceable to Greece or Rome, not fantastic, like that of China, yet neither vulgar nor tasteless. Let us try to amend the general knowledge on this subject; and in doing so, shall draw much useful information from a copious and excellent lecture delivered by Professor Royle, some time since, before the Society of Arts.

First, as to textile manufactures, India has always been noted for her 'webs of woven air,' and she yet worthily maintains pre-eminence. The natives make fabrics not only of cotton, but of *jute* and hemp, &c., and of silks, and wool of sheep, camels, goats, &c. The best judges declare that the Indian cotton, as a raw material, is of very inferior quality, being short and coarse in staple; but this drawback is more than overbalanced by the marvellous delicacy of touch possessed by the Hindoos. They now use the spinning-wheel generally for the ordinary fabrics, but 'the spindle still holds its place in the hands of the Hindoo woman when employed in spinning thread for the fine and delicate muslins to which the names Dew of Night, Running Water, &c., are given by the natives. . . . The Hindoo woman first cards her cotton with the jawbone of the *hoalee* fish; she then separates the seeds by means of a small iron roller, worked backwards and forwards upon a flat board. An equally small bow is used for bringing it to the state of a downy fleece, which is made up into small rolls, to be held in the hand during the process of spinning. The apparatus required for this consists of a delicate iron spindle, having a small ball of clay attached to it, in order to give it sufficient weight in turning, and imbedded in a little clay there is a piece of hard shell, on which the spindle turns with the least degree of friction.' Very great attention is paid to the temperature of the air during the process of spinning, and the spinners in the dry climate of the north-west of India, actually work underground to secure a moist and uniform atmosphere. The cheapness of English manufactured goods seems to have greatly depressed the cotton fabrics of India, but the fine muslins of the latter country yet maintain undisputed celebrity, and are valued as highly as ever. The Dacca muslins are the very finest of all, and the best piece which could be woven in time for the Exhibition, was by a weaver of Golokonda, near Dacca. It was ten yards long by one yard wide; weighed only three ounces, two pennyweights, and could be passed through a very small ring. The Hindoos are able to produce every known variety of cotton fabrics, and practise every kind of weaving, including the extraordinary flowered muslins, and all this with the most simple appliances conceivable.

Silks of every description are produced by these ingenious people, but the raw material is chiefly imported from China. The rich and harmonious patterns of the silk fabrics challenge universal admiration, especially those from Cashmere. Woollen fabrics are not of such superior quality, but many fine specimens were sent. Indian shawls, scarfs, tunics, vests, &c., with brocades of all kinds, are magnificent and unrivalled. They are frequently interwoven with gold

and silver thread, and adorned with jewels. 'But,' remarks Professor Royle, 'even in these gorgeous productions, there is the same attention to harmony of effect, combined with variety and elegance of pattern, that we have observed in the simplest cottons and the richest silks.' The carpets chiefly manufactured in India are of cotton, usually blue and white, with red stripes and stars. They are thick, and both surfaces are smooth and alike. Some are made much like a Turkey carpet, and others are made of silk—the latter are exceedingly splendid, and of brilliant colours. The rugs are also very beautiful.

Turning to the manual and mechanical arts, Professor Royle first directs our attention to lace-making, which he places among the manual arts, because, although much lace is now made by machinery, yet the best article is made, and probably ever will be made, by hand. The lace made by the natives of some parts of India is declared equal to the best French lace; and many visitors to the Exhibition maintained that the Indian lace must have been produced in France. In net-making, the natives of India surpass all the world; but in needle-work they are small adepts, and the reason assigned is, that the Hindoos of both sexes envelop their persons in long pieces of cloth, just as they come from the hands of the weaver, and therefore the needle is almost ignored, so far as its use for stitching dresses is concerned. But darning (*rafugari*) is an art, *sui generis*, in the East, as, according to Mr Taylor, it is indispensable, 'where a defect in a costly shawl is to be made good, or a coarse thread is to be picked out of a piece of muslin, into which it has been accidentally introduced. So skilful are some of these *rafugars*, that they can extract a thread twenty yards long from a piece of the finest muslin, and replace it with one of the finest quality. They are principally employed in repairing the muslins and calicoes that are injured during bleaching, in removing knots, and joining broken threads, and also in forming the gold and silver beadings on cloths.'

The art of embroidery is brought to great perfection—and indeed it has been so practised by the Hindoos from the earliest ages. There are embroidered neck-cloths, scarfs, shawls, muslins, &c.; and the natives embroider European velvets with *tussur*, or wild-silk, floss, or twisted silk thread, and with gold and silver thread and wire. The embroiderers push the needle *from* them, instead of drawing it to them; and in lieu of scissors, they cut the thread with a bit of glass. Dacca and Delhi produce the most valued specimens of embroidery. Saddles, saddle-cloths, dresses, boots, slippers, caps, table-covers, &c., are all richly embroidered, generally with gold and silver thread.

In jewellery, and working in gold and silver, the Hindoos are remarkably tasteful and ingenious. The ornaments are generally peculiar in their shape, and many are of a kind only worn by the natives themselves; but all are executed with exquisite skill, and with very simple tools. The art of making gold wire, gold fringe, and thin tinsel, is known and practised all over India. The tinsel is 'stamped into various forms of flowers, or impressed with excellent imitations of jewels, such as flat diamonds, emeralds, and rubies.'

Carving is an art much practised. The natives 'must have practised it from very early times, probably for their idols, as well as for calico-printing, as they have long used wood-blocks for this purpose. They are fond of carving many of their ordinary utensils, as spinning-wheels, &c.; but their skill was shewn in the carving of the black-wood furniture from Bombay, especially in the elegance of the patterns of the backs of the chairs and sofas, and in the sideboards and bookcases. Such furniture is well adapted for even the best English houses.' Their carvings in ivory are admirable for elaborateness and truth of representation. In carving elephants and other animals, they produce an exact

fac-simile of nature, on a minute scale. 'But the skill of the Indian carver is conspicuously shewn in the beauty, both of the figures of the Rajah and Rancee of Travancore, and of the buildings, in so soft and yielding a material as pith, or rather, in the pith-like stems of the marsh-plant called *shola*. In the latter, all the elaborate detail of the richly ornamented Hindoo architecture of the south of India is carefully brought out. For this work only two tools seem to be employed—one, a large and heavy knife, the other, with a fine sharp-cutting edge.' Besides the carved-worked articles of multiform kind, the natives produce a vast variety of things somewhat akin in class, such as the wonderful shell-bracelets of Bengal, and boxes of horn, ivory, ebony, and sandal-wood, and porcupine-quill; also, fans, chouries, baskets, houkiah-snakes, imitation fruits and flowers, toys, &c.

In working in stone, the Hindoos exhibit incomparable dexterity in polishing and sculpturing the hardest granite, to which they give a glass-like appearance. Dr Kennedy says, that the only tools they use for this are a small steel chisel and an iron mallet. The former tapers to a fine round point, and the face of the latter has a deep hollow, lined with lead. 'With such simple instruments they formed, fashioned, and scooped the granite rock which forms the tremendous fortress of Dowlatabad, and excavated the wonderful caverns of Elora; for it seems by no means probable, that the Hindoo stone-cutters ever worked with any other tools.' They also make elegant cups, and other hollow articles, the cavity being formed 'by a diamond-tipped drill, to the depth of one-fourth of an inch all over the space, until it exhibits a honeycombed appearance; the prominent places around the holes are then chipped away, and this process is repeated, until the depth and form desired are obtained.' The materials thus fashioned are agates, crystals, cornelians, bloodstones, &c., and they are moulded into as elegant shapes as the most plastic porcelain.

In chemical arts, the Hindoos are much greater adepts than is generally known. Besides the ordinary metals, they know how to prepare the oxides of iron, lead, tin, zinc; potash, soda, nitre, sal-ammoniac, alum, sulphates of metals, and acetates, carbonates, and mineral acids. They by no means excel, even if they equal, Europeans in these products; but it is indeed marvellous that a Hindoo, 'with no other tools than his hatchet and his hands, proceeds to smelt iron, which he will convert into steel, capable of competing with the best prepared in Europe.' Mr Heath says, that the 'iron is forged by repeated hammering, until it forms an apparently unpromising bar of iron, from which an English manufacturer of steel would turn with contempt, but which the Hindoo converts into cast steel of the very best quality. To effect this, he cuts it into small pieces, of which he puts a pound, more or less, into a crucible, with dried wood of the *Cassia articulata*, and a few green leaves of *Asclepias gigantea*; or, where that is not to be had, of the *Convolvulus laurifolia*. The object of this is to furnish carbon to the iron.' The same able authority also mentions 'the fact, that iron is converted into cast steel by the natives of India in two hours and a half, with an application of heat that in this country would be considered quite inadequate to produce such an effect; while at Sheffield it requires at least four hours to melt blistered steel in wind-furnaces of the best construction, although the crucibles in which the steel is melted are at a white heat when the metal is put into them; and in the Indian process, the crucibles are put into the furnace quite cold.' Professor Royle remarks, that this Indian steel 'has long formed an article of commerce from the west of India to the Persian Gulf; and there is every probability of its being used in larger quantities, if it were easily procurable in sufficient quantities, as manufacturers here have expressed a desire to employ

it. In the arms which we have had exhibited, as well as in the edges and the points of the tools, we see its admirable fitness for the fabrication of all cutting instruments.' The arms alluded to comprise the immense variety in use at the present day in India, such as chain and scale armour, both for man and horse, helmets and shields, spears, swords, battle-axes, bows and arrows, daggers, &c., many of which display in a very remarkable degree the skill of the makers in cutlery.

The Hindoos do not appear to have made much progress in the art of manufacturing glass, although they have practised it from ancient days. They chiefly use it for ornaments, such as armlets and anklets, and it is generally of a greenish hue. As oxide of iron extensively pervades the Indian soils, it is thought probable that this in some measure militates against the production of good glass. The natives, however, can work up English broken glass even into barometer tubes, &c., and have the art, at Delhi, of making glass globes silvered in the inside. But enamelling is carried to the highest perfection all over India, and is chiefly used to ornament arms and jewellery in gold and in silver. The art of pottery has not made more progress than glass, and one reason assigned for it is, that the Hindoos, owing to their extraordinary religious scruples, will not use a vessel the second time, and therefore they naturally decline to incur any expense for ordinary utensils of pottery. Nevertheless, they manufacture pottery that the best English judges have warmly admired for its extreme elegance of shape. 'The ancient potter's wheel is the instrument with which the Hindoo works; and while it revolves, with the aid of his naked hands he fashions vessels of elegant forms, many of which have been admired as being of classical shapes, and some of them would appear almost as if they were of Etruscan origin; but there is no reason to believe that the Hindoos have ever had anything but their own unerring taste to guide them. This beauty of form is equally conspicuous in the pottery of Sewan, near Patna, as in that of Azimghur or of Ahmedabad, of Mirzapoor or of Moradabad.' Some of the painted and gilt pottery of India is greatly admired.

Dyeing, calico-printing, and printing in gold, are all arts in which the Hindoos have excelled from time immemorial. In calico-printing, we are told that they work 'with a skill which produced much to be admired even in the midst of the productions of the world;' and that, 'although the art is now practised to such perfection in this country, the Indian patterns still retain their own particular beauties, and command a crowd of admirers.' In lacquering, the Hindoos also excel, and the art of paper-making has very long been practised by them. They make paper 'both of cotton and of the substitutes for hemp and flax. In the Himalayas it is made of the inner bark of *Daphne cannabina*, and in sheets of immense size. A large collection was exhibited from different parts of India, but although well adapted for writing on in India, it is not suited for Europe, in consequence of the difference in the ink used.'

In the fine arts, the Hindoos are 'admirable delineators of objects in natural history,' and paint on ivory in beautiful style. In sculpture, they are very able, but not in statuary (proper)—that is, statues and busts. They are, however, admirable engravers, especially of gems, and in mosaics and inlaid-work are hardly to be surpassed.

On a general survey of the artistic productions of India, we are mainly impressed with the extreme beauty, variety, and harmony of the patterns of every article. As Professor Royle remarks: 'Whether in a common chintz, or in a fabric of silk, or one enriched with silver or gold, or with imitations of gems, in all we see the utmost variety kept in bounds by the nicest taste; for even the most flowery and gorgeous appear never to exceed what is suitable to the material and the purpose to which it is to be applied.' Mr Digby

Wyatt supposes the happy effects of Indian designers to be due to the refinement of taste engendered by their traditional education, and that this precludes their toleration of any departure from those harmonious proportions which the practice of ages has sanctioned as most pleasing and agreeable. . . . Even without any mechanical improvements, which may assist in cheapening some of their products, there are enough, which are the produce of their patient habits and wonderful delicacy of hand, and are also examples of purity of taste, which may command a sale in European markets. Though the muslins, both plain and flowered, are greatly admired, yet, as being the produce of many months of hand-labour, they are unable to compete in price with those which are the produce of European machinery; but as they are still preferred in India, a few may continue to be bought in Europe. Their calico prints, flowered silks, and rich kimklohs, being much admired for their patterns, may be applied to a variety of ornamental purposes; if not of dress, still of decorative furniture. The shawls of Cashmere still continue unrivalled, and command the highest prices. The embroidery being equal to anything produced elsewhere, only requires that the things embroidered be fitted for European use, since the cheapness of all handwork in India will insure the prices being reasonable. The manufacture of lace at Nagercoil may safely be undertaken; and the carpets, rugs, and carved furniture, would command a ready sale if offered at rates moderate in proportion to the cost in India. The Wootz steel might be largely consumed, and the highly-wrought arms would be bought as curiosities, as well as for the artistic skill displayed in the cutlery as in the inlaying. Well-shaped pottery, and the highly-finished Bidery ware, as well as the lacquered boxes of Cashmere, would all be bought, as also the various works of Bombay inlaying, of ivory, horn, ebony, and sandal-wood, likewise mats and jappaned boxes. To these we may add the polished agate-ware of Cambay, the inlaid marbles of Arga, and the enamels of Cutch, Scinde, and the north-west of India; also the filigree-work of Cuttack, Dacca, and Delhi, as well as of other places; likewise some native jewellery, if made in the forms fitted for European use. Even the toys would command a sale; and the models of fruits, as well as the figures of natives of different castes and trades, would find purchasers if they could be easily procured.

We cannot help thinking the above observations are sound, and there is therefore a prospect of a new and prosperous future for the ingenious Hindoos. Be that as it may, it is universally admitted that the collection of Indian articles at the Exhibition has been in itself highly instructive as well as interesting. Mr Owen Jones stated, that the opportunity of studying them 'has been a boon to the whole of Europe.' The British government purchased nearly two hundred specimens for the use of the Schools of Design established under its authority.

HAIRY WEP!

'HAIRY WEP!' is to the waysides of the south of Ireland what 'O' Clo!' is to the streets of London. Both cries are alike striking in general tone, but from the effect of constant repetition smoothing away the edges of the syllables, the ear, unaided by the eye, would never recognise the original words. Indeed, in the case of Hairy Wep at least, the original words appear to be irrecoverably lost in their integrity; and we do not pretend to say what they were. 'O' Clo' is seemingly a fair personation of modern economics: he exhibits the division of labour in a marked degree. Hairy Wep is of a different type. He is, singly, a whole embodiment of the all-absorbing spirit of commerce—his bits of brass going to make cannon that will sink or swim with another *Royal*

George; his broken glass, that may have passed from the palace to the cabin, returning to the palace again; his bones to be carved into toys, aids to true education, or ministers to no education at all, or reduced, like himself, 'Gatherer, the son of Scatterer,' to dust; his rags, on their way to bank or book-shop, to be transformed into the universal representative or the universal influence. It would not perhaps be easy to find a second expositor of so many social interests.

In the receptacles for the two staples of his traffic, rags and bones, you may study the costume and dietary of the district in which you meet with Hairy Wep. In the poor rural neighbourhoods, where meat is all but a myth, you see the bone-bag cast behind his shoulder, blown about by the wind: where he holds it open-mouthed in his hand, he and you are, you may be certain, drawing near a town or village. He is making ready for his simple-seeming bargain with the light-hearted serving-wench, who will take out part-payment for her perquisites in wind-cocks or horses for the children of the house, who come trooping round her shoeless feet. Hairy Wep knows how to make his market. He joins, too, with covert grimace, in the laugh at the country-girl, just entered on her first service, who, in selling her portion of kitchen-stuff, has given sixpennyworth for a song.

With his rag-roll grown to a goodly bulk, and his bone-bag filled, Hairy Wep seeks his lodging for the night. He lays by his wallet, and, taking the materials for replenishing his stock, orders down an extra pennyworth of turf, treats the children of the cabin to sugar-sticks, while they stand near to see him paint and bake his phalanx of strange figures for the next day's sale. From year's end to year's end, this is the life of Hairy Wep—a wanderer and a vagabond—come no one knows whence—going no one knows whither—nor cares; bearing about with him a something of almost everything saving that of most importance to those he sojourns amongst—a character.

Hairy is an educating influence more or less for evil and for good. The very antipodes of the wandering poor scholar who taught Virgil and Ovid beside the furze-blossomed hedgerows, his lessons are thoroughly practical, straight to the main point of a poverty-stricken people. The *Vanithee** realises the transmutation of rags to bank-notes, when she herself has got coppers in exchange; the farmer more readily believes bone-dust to be money's worth, after having seen bones bring money. To the younger rustics he is the very genius of opportunity, often an evil genius. See him waiting round a turn in the road, or under covert of a big bush in the *borheen*, sugar-stick in hand, before the palpitating urchin, who stands with eyes and feet wide apart, inclining this way to self-denial and safety, that, to temptation and trickery. Between both Hairy Wep's richest profits lie; pilferers cannot be chaffers. Hairy knows to half a bull's-eye the percentage upon secrecy. He makes a merit of quick bargain and hasty retreat—saving at once his time and his sweetmeats.

Personally, Hairy Wep is a striking and suggestive picture. He is a living history, visibly and audibly illustrative of his country's recently past times. If he is a young man, as is most commonly the case, his rounded swarthy limbs tell of the coarse but careless plenty of the period preceding the potato blight. The janty unheeding fling of his shoulders, his wide-walking, gutter-splashing step, characteristic of the recklessness which marked Irish society in his early days, combining and contrasting with the semi-orderliness of his multifarious burdens, and here and there the sign of his sometimes using the needles he sells, his half-open mouth, his deepening eyes that seem burrowing the brain for make-shifts, and yet 'are glancing with a strange rhythmical sort of roll in time with

* Woman of the house.

his rapid, breathless chant, all shew in Hairy Wep a strong type of a transition state. If he is double—Hairy Wep and Company—he is a still more expressive and illustrative being: an old man and a child, grandfathers and grandsons, extremes of a period; the mid-part, father and son at once, having disappeared by the emigrant-ship, to make greener those 'green fields of America,' of which Hairy Wep, junior, sometimes sings—or through the workhouse gates to enrich the still greener grave-yard, in either case leaving those infants of two ages to walk the world together; the one, timid and trustful, with plaintive, toothless tones, a figure of the simplicity and content of humble plenty, never frightened, but resigned and relying; the other, sharp-visaged, shrewd-eyed, shrill-voiced—a cry, cast at the pitch of famine prices, the features of want animated by a dull but restless life. I once saw such a pair in a country shop laying in their first stock for traffic. The elder was an ordinary old man, but the younger was equally strange and terrible to see. His countenance was not of the care-hardened stamp in which one scarcely recognises childhood. It was a young face: it was not a guilty one; but such an aptitude for wickedness I never before conceived amongst the expressions of the human face malign. There was no timidity, for there was no experience; no remorse, for its deeds were yet undone. To see a second childhood led helplessly by such a guide—one of its own blood, too—was indescribably affecting: a weak frame, a full purse, and a lonely road, would, I thought, be yet more luckless in such company.

Hairy is not a popular personage: he is too frequently suspected of wearing, or at least conveying stolen goods to an anonymous neighbour. To the rich, he is a figure to be warned off from shrubbery or avenue; to the poor, he represents no feeling that awakens sympathy—has not the suffering of the beggar, in seeming or reality, nor the innocence of the idiot, to plead for service beyond what he can pay for. When he disappears, no moan will be made by anybody for Hairy Wep.

OUT-DOOR RECREATIONS.

In a work, entitled *Home-life in Germany*, by C. L. Brace, published in America, and designed apparently for readers alone in that country, we find some pleasing observations on a point in social life in Europe, which is recommended to the attention of hard and ever working Americans.

'I know of nothing in the habits of foreign nations which struck me at first as so entirely new, as a love for outdoor sports. In England, I did not pass through a village without finding the green cricket-ground; and, be it remembered, not with boys at play on it, but men—men often of rank and character. Later in the season were the boat-races, where the whole population gathered; gentlemen of the highest rank presiding, and the nobleman and student tagging at the oar as eagerly as the mechanic or waterman.

'In September, we were making our foot-trip through the Highlands of Scotland, and we scarcely found an inn so remote which was not crowded with gentlemen, shooting, riding, or *pedestrianising* through the mountains, and with the zest and eagerness of boys let out of school.

'On the continent, with the exception of Hungary, there is not such a passion for exciting field-sports; but the same love for the open air. In Paris, a pleasant day will fill the Champs Elysées with cheerful parties, sipping their coffee under the shade, or watching the thousand exhibitions going on in open assemblies. And in the provinces, every man who can have a spot six feet by ten in the free air, uses it to sip his wine or take his "potage" therein.

'In Germany, the country-houses seem to be made without reference to in-door living, and people everywhere take their meals or receive their friends in balconies and arbours. Every city has its gardens and promenades, which

are constantly full. There are open-air games, too, where old and young take part; and in summer, the studying classes, or all who can get leisure, are off on pedestrian tours through the Harz, or Switzerland, or nearer home.

'There is throughout Europe a rich animal love of open-air movement, of plays and athletic sports, of which we Americans, as a people, know little. . . . We, on the other hand, are utterly indifferent to these things. We might pull at a boat-race, but it would be as men, not as boys; because we were determined the Yankee nation should never be beaten, not because we enjoyed it. We do not care for children's sports. We have no time for them. There is a tremendous earnest work to be done, and we cannot spare effort for play. It is unmanly to roll a ball in America. Our amusements are labours. An American travels with an intensity and restlessness, which would of itself exhaust a German; and our city enjoyments are the most wearying and absurd possible.

'We like being together well enough, but our gregarious tendencies are nearly always for some earnest object. We can crowd for a lecture or political meeting, but as to gathering in a coffee-garden or in a park, it would be childish or vulgar.

'I have noticed here this contrast to the Germans, because a most important subject is bound with it—a subject which must more and more demand earnest attention from our scientific men—I mean, *our national health*. . . .

'As a practical conclusion, I would say to every man who would deserve well of his country: Play! play more—patronise, encourage play!

'Why should bowling-alleys and cricket-clubs be given up to "fast men"? Why should rowing-matches and yacht-races, fencing-bouts and boxing-lessons, fishing and shooting, be any more the privilege of "the world," than the church? Why should not respectable, moral, religious people go into any or all of these as they fancy, and invigorate their bodies and cheer the mind? Do not let us grow old and dyspeptic, because we are growing more religious. Let there be something of healthful boyhood in us always. No sports but what are pure, humane, and moral in tone; but where there are such, let no notion of asceticism or false dignity restrain us. Of course, each one will have his favourite amusement; whatever it be, let him remember it is nearly as important for his health of mind as his regular work. For my own part, as a brother of the angle, I most recommend the gentle art. . . .

'Those cheery mountain-walks, the clear dashing brooks, the air, the light, the easy occupation, which always absorbs just enough to let the full, almost unconscious enjoyment of scenery pour into the heart—it makes one a boy again to remember.'

PRESIDENT TAYLOR.

General Taylor simply made one of the congregation, undistinguishable and unremarked. There was something grander in this than in mere regal display, in so far as solid power, without show, impresses the mind much more strongly than show without solid power. Nothing could well be more original than the personal appearance of the late president of the United States, to whom his countrymen gave the sobriquet of 'Rough and Ready.' He was dressed in a suit of plain clothes; his blue coat of anything but the last Bond-street cut. The weather being cold, he wore coloured worsted gloves, which were something too long. His straight hair fell smoothly on his forehead; while his face, browned under many a sun—his temples furrowed with many a thought, gave token of the deeds he had performed, and of the anxieties he had suffered in his country's cause. He had a pleasing expression in his eye; and now humbly standing in the presence of his Maker, surrounded by his fellow-citizens, all within seemed tranquil and serene.—*Robertson's Visit to Mexico.*

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